CHAPTER IV

THE election over, I reported to the War Department for such duty as might be assigned to me. The ranks of Grant's army operating against Richmond having been fearfully thinned by loss in battle and by disease, the government tried various expedients to replenish them. Among others,, a plan was conceived to organize a " Veteran Corps/[5] to consist of old soldiers who, after having served out their three-years' term of enlistment, had left the army, but were still physically able and willing to re-enlist for further service. This " Veteran Corps " was to be commanded by General Hancock, whose conspicuous gallantry in Grant's Virginia campaign had won him the re-pute of being the kind of commander under whom it was an honor to serve. I was ordered by the War Department to visit the governors of several States and the mayors of a number of cities for the purpose of winning their co-operation in the exe-cution of this scheme. This task kept me traveling a large part of the winter. I succeeded in obtaining from most of the offi-cials applied to very fair assurances of support, which, no doubt, were honestly meant, but were hardly borne out by the results of the promised co-operation.

When I personally made my report at the War Depart-ment, Secretary Stanton asked me to bear a confidential com-munication, not to be put on paper, .to Mr. Lincoln, who had gone to City Point, on the James River, in order to have easy

and constant conference with General Grant. I found Mr. Lincoln in excellent spirits. He was confident that the fall of Richmond, and with it the total collapse of the rebellion, would